

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EAE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00
USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AS-01
TRSE-00 EB-07 COME-00 STR-04 EUR-12 /073 W
-----018999 121257Z /47

O R 121058Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9316
INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USLO PEKING
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COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 TOKYO 10425

SEOUL PLEASE PASS TO UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE HABIB

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, JA
SUBJECT: LDP SECURES NARROW UPPER HOUSE WIN

REF: TOKYO 10346

SUMMARY. LDP HAS RETAINED SLIM MAJORITY IN UPPER
HOUSE BY TAKING 63 SEATS IN ITS OWN RIGHT TO WHICH IT
WILL ADD THREE INDEPENDENT AFFILIATES FOR TOTAL OF
127 (INCLUDING HOLDOVERS) IN 252-SEAT HOUSE. ON LEFT,
SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS DECOINED, WHILE IN CENTER,
BOTH CLEAN GOVERNMENT AND DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST PARTIES
GAINED. NEW LIBERAL CLUB FAILED TO LIVE UP TO
EXPECTATIONS, TAKING ONLY THREE SEATS. LDP, PLEASED
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WITH OUTCOME, HAS CLAIMED ELECTORATE VOTED FOR STABILITY.
AT LEAST EQUALLY IMPORTANT FACTOR WAS LDP'S ALL-OUT
EFFORT TO MOBILIZE CONSERVATIVE VOTERS.

OUTCOME LEAVES FUKUDA IN STRENGTHENED POSITION
BOTH AS PRIME MINISTER AND AS LDP HEAD, BUT HE STILL
FACES PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH BARE LDP MAJORITIES IN

BOTH DIET HOUSES. LDP WILL BE COMPELLED TO TAKE FULLY INTO ACCOUNT OPPOSITION VIEWS AND WORK OUT COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS WITH ONE OR MORE CENTRIST PARTIES TO PASS CONTROVERSIAL LEGISLATION. WHILE THERE ARE NO IMMEDIATE IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. INTERESTS, FUKUDA HAS SAID HE INTENDS TO USE HIS NEWLY ACQUIRED "MANDATE" TO TACKLE PENDING FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES, INCLUDING OUTSTANDING U.S.-JAPAN TRADE QUESTIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. WITH ALL RESULTS IN, LDP HAS MAINTAINED ITS BARE MAJORITY IN UPPER HOUSE. LDP, WHICH HAD 65 SEATS AT STAKE, WON 63 SEATS TO WHICH IT CAN ADD THREE INDEPENDENTS WHO HAVE OR WILL JOIN LDP. ADDED TO 61 HOLDOVERS, LDP WILL HAVE 127 OF UPPER HOUSE'S 252 SEATS.

2. FINAL ELECTION RESULTS BY PARTY AS FOLLOWS:

PARTY	NEW		LOCAL		NAT'L		PCT OF		TOTAL	UPPER HOUSE	COMPOSITION
	CONST	VOTE	CONST	VOTE	CONST	VOTE	CONST	VOTE			
LDP	45	39.5	18	35.8	63	124	PLUS3#				
JSP	17	25.9	10	17.4	27	56					

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CGP	5	6.2	9	14.2	14	28				
JCP	2	9.9	3	8.4	5	16				
DSP	2	4.5	4	6.7	6	11				
NLC	2	5.7	1	3.9	3	4	PLUS1#			
MINOR	1	3.5	2	6.2	3#	3	-1#			
IND	2	4.8	3	7.4	5#	9	-3#			
VACANT						1				
TOTAL	76	100	50	100	126	252				

THREE OF EIGHT WILL JOIN LDP; ONE NLC.

3. LDP WAS PREDICTED BY ALL MEDIA (AND EMBASSY) TO FALL SHORT BY A FEW SEATS OF KEEPING ITS MAJORITY, BUT TO SURPRISE OF MOST OBSERVERS, SQUEEKED THROUGH. ITS SEAT

PERFORMANCE, PARTICULARLY IN LOCAL CONSTITUENCIES, WAS IMPRESSIVE. LDP'S POPULAR VOTE IN LOCAL CONSTITUENCIES WAS EXACTLY SAME AS IN 1974 ELECTION, ALTHOUGH IT DROPPED OFF BY 8.5 PERCENT IN NATIONAL CONSTITUENCY. HOWEVER, LDP RAN ONLY 22 NATIONAL CONSTITUENCY CANDIDATES THIS YEAR COMPARED WITH 35 IN 1971, AND HAD NLC COMPETITION FOR FIRST TIME. IN NATIONAL CONSTITUENCY, LDP DID NOT HAVE INDIVIDUAL BRIGHT STAR BUT 7 LDP CANDIDATES FINISHED AMONG TOP TEN. OVERALL PERFORMANCE CLEARLY REFLECTED LDP'S FULL SCALE, WELL-ORGANIZED EFFORT TO MOBILIZE PARTY FAITHFUL BOTH IN LOCAL AREAS AND NATIONAL CONSTITUENCIES.

4. A BROADLY SMILING FUKUDA FOUND ELECTION RESULTS "WONDERFUL." NO ONE CAN DISPUTE HIS CLAIM THAT UPPER HOUSE VOTE
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WAS "FOR STABILITY AND AGAINST CHANGE." FOR THOSE WITH DOUBTS, OUTCOME ALSO PROVED THAT UNIFIED LDP IN CRISIS MOOD REMAINS FAR AND AWAY MOST FORMIDABLE POLITICAL FORCE IN JAPANESE POLITICS. RESULT ALSO CLEARLY STRENGTHENED FUKUDA'S PERSONAL POSITION AS PRIME MINISTER AND LDP CHIEFTAIN. IT HAS SILENCED WOULD-BE CRITICS WITHIN LDP AND ENDED ALL TALK OF POSSIBLE NEAR-TERM LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE OR PARTY SPLIT. FROSTING ON CAKE WAS TEN-SEAT SET BACK FOR "FORMER" TANAKA FACTION, MAKING FUKUDA'S "FORMER" FACTION, WHICH LOST ONLY ONE SEAT, LARGEST IN LDP.

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5. MANY ARE INTERESTED, OF COURSE, IN HOW FUKUDA WILL USE RECENTLY ACQUIRED "MANDATE." THUS FAR, HE HAS REPEATEDLY DENIED ANY INTENTION OF EARLY CABINET SHUFFLE OR LOWER HOUSE DISSOLUTION. (LDP LEADERSHIP APPARENTLY INTENDS ONLY BRIEF EXTRAORDINARY DIET SESSION, MAINLY FOR UPPER HOUSE ORGANIZATIONAL PURPOSES, BEGINNING JULY 28.) FUKUDA HAS, HOWEVER, EXPRESSED HOPE THAT ELECTION OUTCOME WILL HELP HIM IN TACKLING PENDING FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES. HE HAS MENTIONED SPECIFICALLY PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP TREATY WITH PRC, FISHERIES AND TERRITORIAL ISSUES WITH SOVIETS, OUTSTANDING TRADE MATTERS -- AND TRADE BALANCE -- WITH U.S., AND "POSITIVE APPROACH" TO ASEAN. JAPANESE BUSINESSMEN, WHO EXCEEDED CONTRIBUTION QUOTAS IN ASSUMING LDP SUCCESS, HAVE ALSO URGED PROMPT
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ATTENTION TO BUSINESS RECOVERY.

6. AS PREDICTED, PARTIES ON LEFT DID POORLY. JAPAN SOCIALIST PARTY (JSP) MUSTERED UNION SUPPORT AND SLIGHTLY INCREASED ITS POPULAR VOTE COMPARED TO 1974, BUT PERFORMED AS EXPECTED, DOWN FIVE SEATS FROM 32. HIDEO DEN, WHO FINISHED FIRST IN NATIONAL CONSTITUENCY IN 1971, REPEATED THIS YEAR TAKING 1.5 MILLION VOTES. PRESENTLY JSP INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DIRECTOR, HE MAY WELL CLIMB FURTHER IN PARTY LEADERSHIP RUNGS IN FUTURE. ALL OF JSP'S LABOR UNION CANDIDATES IN NATIONAL CONSTITUENCY WON. FOR FIRST TIME IN RECENT YEARS, HOWEVER, JSP DID NOT HAVE SUCCESSFUL LOCAL CONSTITUENCY CANDIDATE IN TOKYO, PROBABLY REFLECTING LESSENERED SUPPORT AMONG URBAN "FLOATING" VOTERS. IN TV INTERVIEWS, BOTH JSP CHAIRMAN NARITA AND SEC GEN ISHIBASHI HAVE APPEARED GREATLY CHAGRINED AT POOR SHOWING. ISHIBASHI PUT PART OF BLAME FOR JSP'S LOSSES ON DEFECTION OF LATE SABURO EDA, WHOSE SON, STANDARD BEARER OF SOCIALIST CITIZENS' LEAGUE, FINISHED SECOND IN NATIONAL CONSTITUENCY WITH 1.4 MILLION VOTES. MEDIA ARE SAYING THAT DEFECTION PLUS INTRA-PARTY CONFRONTATION BETWEEN LEFT AND RIGHT WING FACTIONS

DAMAGED JSP IMAGE WITH VOTERS. JSP HAS SCHEDULED EMERGENCY MEETING OF CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL JULY 13 WHERE, ACCORDING TO PRESS, CHAIRMAN NARITA WILL TENDER RESIGNATION. WHILE RESIGNATION MAY NOT BE ACCEPTED IMMEDIATELY, WE EXPECT SETBACK WILL WORSEN INTRA-PARTY ANIMOSITY OVER PARTY POLICY AND LEADERSHIP.

7. JAPAN COMMUNIST PARTY SUFFERED LARGE SETBACK. IT HAD BEEN COUNTING ON 7 VICTORIOUS NATIONAL CONSTITUENCY CANDIDATES, BUT ONLY THREE WON. CHAIRMAN MIYAMOTO PLACED 41ST IN NATIONAL CONSTITUENCY, APPARENTLY CONFIDENTIAL

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AS PLANNED, SO AS NOT TO TAKE AWAY TOO MANY VOTES FROM OTHER JCP CANDIDATES, BUT ARITHMETIC OF ELECTION WAS NONETHELESS SUCH THAT FOUR LOSING JCP CANDIDATES FINISHED JUST BELOW VICTORY LINE. LIKE JSP, COMMUNISTS UNEXPECTEDLY FAILED TO TAKE LOCAL CONSTITUENCY SEAT IN TOKYO. JCP NATIONAL CONSTITUENCY VOTE WAS ALSO DISTINCTLY BELOW RATES FOR 1974 ELECTION. PARTY OFFICIALS ARE FRANKLY ADMITTING THAT RESULTS WERE DEFEAT.

8. BY AND LARGE, CENTRIST PARTIES PERFORMED WELL. CLEAN GOVERNMENT PARTY (CGP) BOOSTED ITS NATIONAL CONSTITUENCY VOTE FROM 12.1 PERCENT IN 1974 TO 14.2 PERCENT; ALL NINE CGP CANDIDATES IN NATIONAL CONSTITUENCY WERE ELECTED. MAIN FACTOR IN CPG'S SUCCESS, GAIN OF THREE SEATS, WAS ORGANIZATIONAL MUSCLE. LIKE LDP, IT SUCCESSFULLY PULLED IN REGULAR -- MOSTLY SOKA GAKKAI -- VOTERS. SECGEN YANO, PLEASED WITH RESULTS, HAS BEEN SAYING THAT CGP'S SUCCESS CONFIRMS IT AS LEADER OF CENTRISTS.

9. DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST PARTY (DSP) ALSO DID REASONABLY WELL. IT GAINED ONE SEAT AND INCREASED SLIGHTLY ITS PERCENTAGE OF POPULAR VOTES COMPARED TO 1974. DSP'S SUPPORT BASE, JAPAN CONFEDERATION OF LABOR (DOMEI), WAS MAIN FACTOR IN ELECTING ALL FOUR DSP NATIONAL CONSTITUENCY CANDIDATES. DSP SECGEN TSUKAMOTO, HOWEVER, HAS EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THESE RESULTS IN TV INTERVIEWS. DSP HAD HOPED FOR BETTER PERFORMANCE IN URBAN LOCAL CONSTITUENCIES TO JUSTIFY CLAIM OF STRONG UPWARD TREND IN ITS SUPPORT RATE. INSTEAD, IT CAN BE SAID THAT DSP'S SOMEWHAT IMPROVED PERFORMANCE, DEPENDENT AS IT WAS ALMOST SOLELY ON LABOR BASE, AMOUNTS TO SMALL BUT SIGNIFICANT GAIN.

10. NEW LIBERAL CLUB (NLC), WINNING ONLY ONE NATIONAL AND TWO LOCAL CONSTITUENCY SEATS, DID NOT LIVE UP TO EXPECTATIONS OF MEDIA WHICH PREDICTED SIX-SEAT TOTAL IN CONFIDENTIAL

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NLC'S FIRST UPPER HOUSE EFFORT. OTHER NLC CANDIDATES FINISHED IN 51ST, 59TH (SABURO OKITA), AND 62ND PLACE IN NATIONAL CONSTITUENCY, AND UNSUCCESSFUL LOCAL CONSTITUENCY CANDIDATES MADE RESPECTABLE SHOWINGS, PARTICULARLY IN RURAL AREAS. MAIN CAUSE OF SHORTFALL APPARENTLY WAS NLC'S WEAK ORGANIZATIONAL BASE, FACTOR TO WHICH BOTH NLC LEADER KNON AND SEC GEN NISHIOKA POINTED IN EXPLAINING THEIR DISAPPOINTING PERFORMANCE.

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TRSE-00 EB-07 COME-00 STR-04 EUR-12 /073 W
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O R 121058Z JUL 77

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11. MINOR PARTIES AND LARGE ASSORTMENT OF INDEPENDENTS ALSO FARED POORLY. JAPAN WOMEN'S PARTY ATTRACTED ONLY FRINGE VOTE. PROGRESSIVE LIBERAL LEAGUE, COLLECTION OF SHOWBIZ PERSONALITIES, SUCCEEDED ONLY IN ELECTING COMEDIAN NAMED YOKOYAMA. THE ONLY SUCCESSFUL MINOR PARTY CANDIDATE, BESIDES YOUNG EDA OF SCL, WAS ETO IN

OITA, WHO IS SCHEDULED TO JOIN LDP, ALTHOUGH TECHNICALLY AMONG MINOR PARTY CANDIDATES RATHER THAN INDEPENDENTS. FIVE ELECTED INDEPENDENTS WERE: TAHARA IN KUMAMOTO AND TAKAHASHI (BOTH TO JOIN LDP ALONG WITH ETO); NLC-"RECOMMENDED" KENZO KONO, UNCLE OF NLC LEADER AND INCUMBENT PRESIDENT OF UPPER HOUSE; CHIMPEI NOZUE, EXPECTED TO JOIN NLC; AND, EICHI YASHIRO, "PROGRESSIVE" WHO WILL PROBABLY REMAIN UNAFFILIATED. CONFIDENTIAL

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LIKE NLC, INDEPENDENT AND MINOR PARTY CANDIDATES SUFFERED FROM LACK OF ORGANIZATIONAL BASE.

12. UNLIKE DECEMBER 1976 LOWER HOUSE ELECTIONS, WHERE TREND AWAY FROM LDP AND LEFTIST PARTIES TOWARD CENTRISTS WAS CLEARLY IDENTIFIABLE, THERE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN NO PARTICULAR VOTING TREND IN THIS ELECTION. FOR MOST PART, PAST UPPER HOUSE PATTERNS WERE REPEATED. IN INTERPRETING OUTCOME, EARLY PRESS EDITORIALS HAVE FALLEN INTO TWO CATEGORIES. ONE VIEW (ASAHI AND TOKYO SHIMBUN) SEES LDP MERELY PROFITING FROM WEAKNESS OF OPPOSITION PARTIES WITH VOTERS SHOWING NO REAL PREFERENCE FOR LDP. OTHER (MAINICHI, YOMIURI, SANKEI) SUGGESTS THAT PEOPLE VOTED FOR LDP, WHICH OFFERED STABILITY, IN PREFERENCE TO UNCERTAIN PROSPECTS WITH OPPOSITON. EMBASSY'S OWN VIEW IS THAT, WHILE LDP DID TO CERTAIN EXTENT BENEFIT FROM VOTER FEAR OF INSTABILITY, AT LEAST EQUALLY IMPORTANT WAS EFFECTIVE MOBILIZATION OF CONSERVATIVE VOTE.

13. BY HOLDING ITS OWN IN UPPER HOUSE, LDP HAS OBIATED POSSIBILITY THAT OPPOSITION PARTIES, ON THOSE FEW OCCASIONS WHEN THEY AGREE, COULD OUTVOTE THEM. MOREOVER, LDP COULD CHOOSE TO OUST OPPOSITION-BACKED "INDEPENDENT" UPPER HOUSE PRESIDENT KENZO KONO, ALTHOUGH PARTY WOULD HAVE TO GIVE UP ONE UPPER HOUSE VOTE TO DO SO. TENUOUSNESS OF LDP MAJORITY WILL COMPEL, HOWEVER, CAREFUL ATTENTION TO OPPOSITION VIEWS AND ALMOST CERTAINLY NECESSITATE COOPERATION OF ONE OR MORE CENTRIST PARTIES ON SHARPLY CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES. WELL AWARE OF THIS, LDP LEADERSHIP HAS ALREADY VOICED ITS INTENTION TO STRENGTHEN TIES WITH DSP. IN SUM, WE CAN EXPECT UPPER HOUSE TO OPERATE VERY MUCH AS IT HAS DURING PAST CONFIDENTIAL

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DIET SESSION, WITH LARGE AMOUNT OF TIME REQUIRED FOR

PARTY LEADERS TO FASHION COMPROMISES NECESSARY FOR
SMOOTH UPPER HOUSE OPERATION.

14. ELECTION OUTCOME HAS NO IMMEDIATE IMPLICATIONS
FOR U.S. INTERESTS. AS REPORTED EARLIER, MUTUAL
SECURITY TREATY AND U.S. TROOP PRESENCE WERE NOT
SIGNIFICANT ELECTION ISSUES. NOR WERE OTHER MORE TOPICAL
ISSUES SUCH AS REPROCESSING, CIVIL AVIATION OR FISHERIES,
WHERE ALL JAPANESE PARTIES TEND TO SHARE COMMON POSITION.
U.S.-JAPAN RELATIONSHIP MAY, HOWEVER, HAVE RECEIVED SLIGHT
FILLIP TO EXTENT THAT IS ASSOCIATED IN PUBLIC MIND
WITH LDP AND STATUS QUO. PERHAPS MORE IMPORTANT, IF
INDIRECT, EFFECT RELATES TO FUKUDA'S STRENGTHENED POSITION.
ALTHOUGH HE IS STILL HEIR TO PROBLEMS FACING ALL PRIME
MINISTERS WITH SLIM LEGISLATIVE MAJORITIES, HE WILL
NOT HAVE TO WORRY INORDINATELY ABOUT PARTY UNITY OR
DEVOTE SUBSTANTIAL ATTENTION TO FASHIONING SERIES OF
AGREEMENTS WITH OPPOSITION PARTIES TO INSURE PASSAGE
OF HIS LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM. HE CAN THUS DEVOTE MORE TIME
TO MATTERS WHERE WE SHARE COMMON OBJECTIVES, SUCH AS
ECONOMIC RECOVERY, TRADE AND MONETARY ISSUES. HE
SHOULD ALSO BE IN STRONGER POSITION TO CARRY OUT ANY
AGREEMENTS HE MAY MAKE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTION RESULTS, UPPER HOUSE, POLITICAL PARTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 12-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977TOKYO10425
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770247-0423
Format: TEL
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Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 8
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 TOKYO 10346
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Event:
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Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1883899
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LDP SECURES NARROW UPPER HOUSE WIN
TAGS: PINT, JA
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9cf1e66c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009